

Amendments to the claims

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-5 (cancelled).

Claim 6 (currently amended) A spinal fluid collection system for use by a medical professional for collecting, from a spinal tap into a plurality of CSF tubes, multiple samples of cerebrospinal fluid from a patient, comprising, in combination,

a) a plurality of CSF tubes structured and arranged to receive, seal, and transport cerebrospinal fluid;

b) at least one spinal tap assembly structured and arranged to tap into the patient to obtain a flow of cerebrospinal fluid; and

c) a holder structured and arranged to stably hold said CSF tubes when said holder is in an upright position;

d) wherein said holder comprises a handle structured and arranged to assist single-hand manipulation of said holder by the medical professional during the collecting of the cerebrospinal fluid directly from said spinal tap into said CSF tubes, when held by said holder, in a continuing manner without the need to grasp any said CSF tube during the collecting; and

e) wherein ~~when~~ said holder is structured and arranged to stably hold, when said holder is in an upright position, an element selected from the group consisting of:

a) (1) a spinal needle;

- b) (2) a spinal needle sleeve;
- e) (3) a spinal needle stylet;
- d) (4) a spinal needle sleeve holding a spinal needle; and
- e) (5) a spinal needle sleeve holding a spinal needle and a stylet;
- f) wherein said holder is structured and arranged to stably hold the plurality of ~~four~~ of the CSF tubes when said holder is in an upright position;
- g) wherein said holder is structured and arranged to stably hold, when said holder is in an upright position, at a first portion of said holder an element selected from such group;
- h) wherein said holder is structured and arranged to stably hold, when said holder is in an upright position, at a second portion of said holder an element selected from such group.

Claim 7 (currently amended) The spinal fluid collection system according to Claim 6 wherein said holder further comprises:

- a) four first vertical cavities each structured and arranged to support one of the CSF tubes; and
- b) at least two second vertical cavities each structured and arranged to support an ~~any such~~ element selected from such group.

Claims 8-9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (previously presented) The spinal fluid collection system according to Claim 7 wherein:

- a) said first and second vertical cavities are arranged along a horizontal longitudinal row, having a midpoint, of said holder; and
- b) said handle is essentially horizontal and symmetrical with respect to such midpoint.

Claim 11 (previously presented) The spinal fluid collection system according to Claim 10 wherein said handle comprises the furthest longitudinal horizontal extensions of said holder.

Claims 12-38 (cancelled).

Claim 39 (currently amended) A method of using a spinal fluid collection system comprising the steps of:

- a) providing an open-sided spinal fluid collection test tube rack comprising a plurality of test tube holders and two needle holders;
- b) arranging at least three open test tubes in a test tube holder of the test tube rack;
- c) placing a needle sleeve into a first needle holder;

- d) inserting a spinal needle containing a stylet between a patient's vertebrae until a tip of the spinal needle reaches a dural space;
- e) removing the stylet from the needle;
- f) placing the stylet in a second needle holder;
- g) holding said test tube rack containing the at least three open test tubes under a proximal end of the needle to catch CSF;
- h) determining when an open test tube contains a sufficient amount of CSF;
- i) shifting the open-sided spinal fluid collection test tube rack so that CSF drips from the proximal end of the needle into a second open test tube;
- j) determining when the second open test tube contains a sufficient amount of CSF;
- k) shifting the open-sided spinal fluid collection test tube rack so that CSF drips from the proximal end of the needle into a second open test tube;
- l) determining when the second open test tube contains a sufficient amount of CSF;
- m) removing the stylet from the needle holder;
- n) replacing the stylet inside the needle;
- o) removing the needle from the dural space;
- p) placing the spinal needle containing the stylet into the needle holder; and
- q) closing the at least three open test tubes;
- r) replacing the stylet inside the needle;
- s) removing the needle from the dural space;

AMENDMENT IN RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
US Application No. 09/730,334

- t) placing the spinal needle containing the stylet into the needle holder; and
- u) closing the at least three open test tubes.

Claims 40-64 (cancelled)